MEN 2B GENETIC SYNDROME DRAWER 3A HEALTH

71.2009.085.03480

Abraham Lincoln's Health

MEN 2B Genetic Syndrome

Excerpts from newspapers and other sources

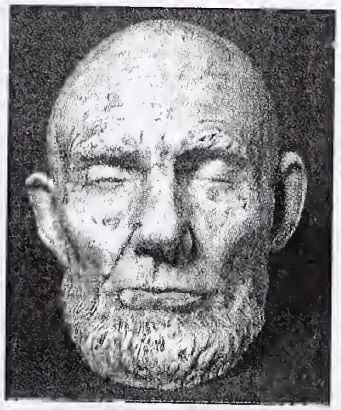
From the files of the

Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

71.2009.085.03480

The Journal Gazette

Lincoln might have carried rare genetic condition



Washington Post

A physician believes that Abraham Lincoln had the rare, cancer-causing genetic disease MEN 2B.

BY DAVID BROWN
Washington Post

Abraham Lincoln was the rarest of men, and John G. Sotos believes that extended all the way to his chromosome 10.

A physician, connoisseur of rare ailments and amateur historian, Sotos believes Lincoln had a genetic syndrome called MEN 2B. He thinks the diagnosis not only accounts for Lincoln's great height, which has been the subject of most medical speculation over the years, but for many of the president's other reported ailments and behaviors.

He also suspects Lincoln was dying of cancer at the time he was assassinated, and was unlikely to have survived a year. He thinks cancer – an inevitable element of MEN 2B – killed at least one of Lincoln's four sons, three of whom died before reaching age 20.

Sotos' theory assigns one of medicine's rarest conditions to one of the nation's best-known figures. It is likely to be controversial. But unlike many historical diagnoses, it can be easily proved or rejected with a DNA test for the single mutation in the gene called RET on chromosome 10 that causes MEN 2B.

Samples of the martyred president's DNA presumably exist in bloodstained fabrics scattered around the country and in eight skull fragments from Lincoln's autopsy in the possession of the federal government. Whether anyone will be willing to sacrifice part of a relic to answer this question is another issue.

Sotos, 50, a cardiologist who heads a medical device company in Palo Alto, Calif., is publishing his idea in a Web-based book, "The Physical Lincoln," which is expected to be available next month. He will present his findings at Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore on Wednesday.

MEN 2B is short for "multiple endocrine neoplasia type 2B." It is a subtype of a genetic disease whose sufferers invariably develop cancer in a hormone-producing organ. Some are born with tumors. Nearly every victim gets cancer of the thyroid gland, and about half also get cancer of the adrenal gland. In about half the cases, patients inherit the disease from a parent. In the remainder of cases, the mutation appears spontaneously in the sufferer, who can then pass it on to children.

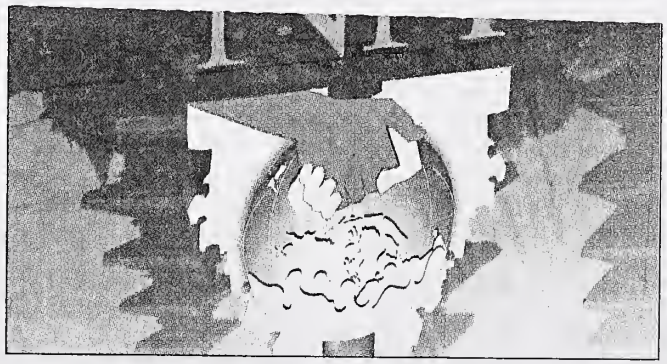
If Abraham Lincoln had MEN 2B, he would be the first recorded case.

Nations to gather in Bali for key talks on global warming

BY CHARLES J. HANLEY
Associated Press

NEW YORK – The latest news from the climate front isn't good.

The Arctic ice cap melted this summer to the greatest extent on record. Scientists say oceans are losing some ability to absorb atmospheric carbon dioxide, the chief industrial emission blamed for



That 175-nation accord, a 1997 annex to the 1992 U.N. climate treaty, requires 36 industrial nations to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by an average 5 percent below 1990 levels by 2010.

The United States and Australia were the only major industrial nations to reject Kyoto, and as a result U.S. greenhouse emissions will grow 33 percent between

some of whom are former police officers, Friday identified stains on Rivera's clothing as originating from pepper spray, according to Rosario.

Rosario said promoters and makeup artists of rival contestants are suspected of being behind the sabotage effort, but he did not name names.

From the beginning, Rivera's bid for the crown was contentious. Some of her rivals felt at a disadvantage because she was a veteran contestant, having been second runner-up in the 2005 Miss World contest.

A bag with Rivera's clothing

Alvarez said Monday that an evening gown and Rivera's makeup have been delivered to the Institute of Forensic Sciences for a chemical analysis.

Magali Febles, director of the Miss Puerto Rico Universe pageant, said earlier that the substance used in the alleged attempt to derail Rivera's bid for the crown appeared to be pepper gas.

Rivera tearfully recounted her ordeal at a news conference Sunday, acknowledging she had wavered about staying in

chicagotribune.com

NATION

Lincoln had cancer, doctor theorizes

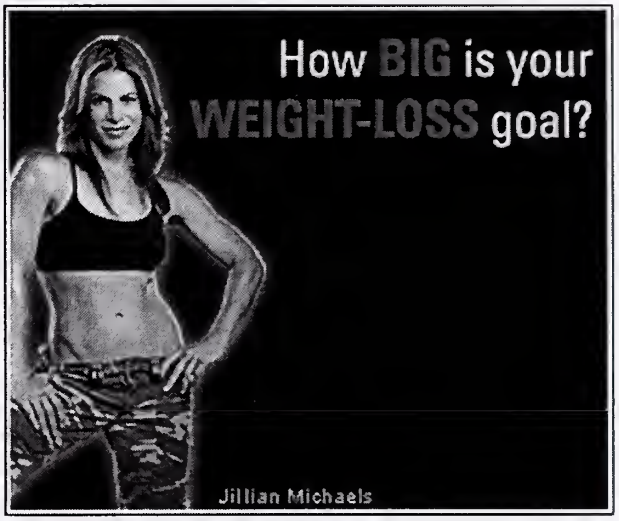
16th president might have had cancer, doctor theorizes

By Gabrielle Russon

Tribune staff reporter

November 29, 2007

BALTIMORE



Maybe it's the classic story about the underdog who strives to be great. Perhaps it's the sad eyes of the first president to be assassinated. Whatever the reason, Abraham Lincoln has become a figure who is scrutinized and speculated on over and over again.

Some have speculated that Lincoln suffered from depression, had syphilis or was gay. Others wonder why Lincoln was so tall and lanky.

And now Dr. John Sotos, a California cardiologist dubbed by some as a "medical sleuth," is theorizing that the 16th president was dying from cancer, with only six months to a year to live, from a rare genetic syndrome known as MEN 2B.

Sotos spent Wednesday at Johns Hopkins Hospital sharing his findings. For years, some doctors have believed Lincoln had Marfan syndrome, which affects the body's connective tissue and causes long limbs.

"With Abraham Lincoln, he was tall; he was very big," said Charis Eng, a genetics cancer expert at the Cleveland Clinic. "It looked like he had [Marfan syndrome]."

But the medical puzzle becomes only more complicated. Eng said Lincoln's height and long limbs could be a clue that the diagnosis was something else. With MEN 2B, "patients look as if they have Marfan's, even though they do not," said Eng, who discovered the gene while at the University of Cambridge during the early 1990s.

Instead, Lincoln suffered from MEN 2B, which Eng called "quite rare." Sotos said the syndrome makes bumps, or benign tumors of nerve tissue, grow on victims' lips. About one person of every million has the disease, he said.

The syndrome also causes cancer in organs, like the thyroid, that produce hormones, and Sotos said he believes Lincoln was dying of cancer when he was shot in 1865.

Sotos said he looked at 130 Lincoln photographs as well as plaster face and hand masks taken of Lincoln that are

stored in the National Portrait Gallery. Sotos said the bumps on Lincoln's lips are clearly visible.

It was also well-known that Lincoln was often constipated. With MEN 2B, the same lumps on the lips and cheeks can also grow inside the intestines, causing gastrointestinal problems.

The signs that Lincoln was dying of cancer are there, too, Sotos said, from Lincoln's weight loss to his crippling headaches to his cold hands and feet. "We don't have the smoking gun for cancer, but again, everything seems consistent with it," Sotos said.

MEN 2B ran through the Lincoln family line, Sotos said. There's too much coincidence that two of Lincoln's sons, had the same lesions on their lips, as seen in photographs, and died at young ages, Sotos said.

Eng said the controversial new theory sounded possible, and the doctors at Johns Hopkins listened to Sotos' findings with interest.

But some numbers don't add up, as even Sotos acknowledged. Lincoln was 56 when he was shot in Ford's Theatre, which is old for someone suffering from MEN 2B. Most with the syndrome develop cancer in their 20s and die about 10 years later, although no large medical studies have thoroughly examined the age connection with MEN 2B.

A DNA test has a 95 percent chance of answering his medical question, but no tests are planned yet. "It's certainly a possibility," Sotos said. "The people who have control have the artifacts" -- Lincoln's blood and brain tissue.

Some, like Illinois state historian Thomas Schwartz, welcome academia's fascination with Lincoln. "If we don't have intellectual curiosity about the world around us and constantly ask the fundamental questions again and again," Schwartz said, "we're not engaging in the world around us."

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*Abraham Lincoln's health has been

scrutinized

in recent

decades, as some scientists have sought to show that he inherited a genetic

ailment called Marfan

syndrome. It can lead to a gaunt frame, slender fingers and internal

bleeding.

-- Tribune staff

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Galesburg.com
Home of The Register-Mail

Lincoln documentary filmed at Orpheum on TV

Premieres on National Geographic Channel in February

The Register-Mail
Posted Jan 20, 2011 @ 08:23 AM

Recommend Be the first of your friends to recommend this.

GALESBURG — The Orpheum Theatre this week announced that the National Geographic Channel will air the world premiere of "Lincoln's Secret Killer" at 9 p.m. Feb. 21.

The documentary was filmed in part at the Orpheum Theatre as well as a private residence in Galesburg.

According to National Geographic's website, the documentary seeks to solve a genetic mystery — was Abraham Lincoln dying of cancer when he was killed? Clues from history books and symptoms spotted in old photographs have led obscure diagnosis expert Dr. John Sotos to compile a compelling medical chart. He believes Lincoln and three of his four sons suffered from MEN2B, a rare, inherited cancer syndrome. The investigation traces the path of Lincoln's assassination blood trail, searching for historical relics stained with Lincoln's blood. It is the first-ever attempt at testing Lincoln's DNA.

Scenes of Lincoln's dramatic and violent assassination at Ford's Theatre were re-created and filmed at Galesburg's Orpheum Theatre in January 2010 over two days.

"It was an amazing experience to watch the production crew reconstruct one of America's defining historical moments in our own theater," said Orpheum President Kate Francis. "I can't wait to see the finished product — even if the Orpheum is featured for only a few minutes."

In addition to utilizing one of Galesburg's most iconic architectural gems, the film crew also made use of the theater's original scenic flats from its early days as a vaudeville house. The film crew also rented props and staging materials from vendors in the area.

"Positioning the Orpheum Theatre as a film location is another way in which the theater can support and encourage economic activity in our community," added Francis. "The film crew not only expended resources to rent the theater, they also invested in hotel accommodations, food and beverages (coffee — lots of coffee — from our local shop), props, construction materials — the list goes on."

In addition to filming the assassination scene at the theater, Francis said, the production crew asked her to scout out an outdoor, wrought iron spiral staircase at which to film another scene designed to offer an artistic interpretation of Lincoln's DNA.

"So I sent out some e-mails to native Galesburgians asking where I might find such a staircase," Francis said. "I was surprised by how many responses and by how many staircases there actually were that fit the bill. So I drove around in the dead of winter jumping out of my car to take pictures of the various staircase locations in Galesburg and sending them on to the production assistant."

Ultimately, the producer and director decided upon an iron spiral staircase that runs up the side of an historic three-story home on the southwest edge of downtown Galesburg.

"It was a great triumph for our community to have exactly what the director was looking for to create this pivotal scene," Francis said. "The crew stayed an extra day to film that additional scene in Galesburg rather than finding another location or community."

In addition to serving as a location for National Geographic's "Lincoln's Secret Killer," the Orpheum Theatre recently served as a film site for portions of the documentary film "The Day Carl Sandburg Died" by Bonesteel Films as well as "Close But No Cigar: Bob Zany" a documentary by Day of Fun Pictures about Bob Zany's life and profession as a comedian. Both of these films are on the film festival circuit.

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Lincoln documentary filmed at Orpheum on TV

Premieres on National Geographic Channel in February

The Register-Mail file photo
The National Geographic Channel will air the world premiere of "Lincoln's Secret Killer" at 9 p.m. Feb. 21. The documentary was filmed in part at the Orpheum Theatre, above, and a private residence in Galesburg.

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2012 with funding from
Friends of The Lincoln Collection of Indiana, Inc.

http://archive.org/details/abrahamlincolnsxxxx00linc